

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF
INDIANA, EVANSVILLE DIVISION

Janet B. v. Frank Bisignano, Commissioner of Social Security
Administration

Janet B. · No. 3:24-cv-00236-RLY-CSW · Decided December 31, 2025

SUMMARY

The United States District Court for the Southern District of Indiana overruled Janet B.'s objections and adopted the Magistrate Judge's Report and Recommendation affirming the denial of her Social Security disability benefits claims. The court held that the ALJ's residual functional capacity assessment, evaluation of subjective symptoms, and treatment of a consultative physician's opinion were supported by substantial evidence.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	United States District Court for the Southern District of Indiana, Evansville Division
WRITING FOR THE COURT	Richard L. Young
JURISDICTION	United States District Court for the Southern District of Indiana, Evansville Division
DECIDED	December 31, 2025
DOCKET	3:24-cv-00236-RLY-CSW
DISPOSITION	affirmed
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	Action under 42 U.S.C. § 405(g) seeking judicial review of an administrative denial of Social Security disability benefits; the district court reviewed objections to a magistrate judge's report and recommendation recommending affirmance of the ALJ's decision.
STANDARD OF REVIEW	The court reviewed the magistrate judge's report and recommendation de novo under Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 72(b)(3). It reviewed the ALJ's decision for application of the correct legal standard and support by substantial evidence, while reviewing the ALJ's credibility determination only for patent wrongness and declining to reweigh evidence, resolve evidentiary conflicts, determine credibility, or substitute its judgment for the Commissioner's.

PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	Unknown; district-court opinion with no reporter citation and source metadata listing precedential status as Unknown.
PARTIES	Janet B. v. Frank Bisignano, Commissioner of Social Security Administration

TOPICS

judicial review of agency action agency adjudication administrative law civil procedure

PRACTICE AREAS

Social Security disability administrative law federal civil procedure

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether the ALJ's evaluation of Janet B.'s subjective symptom and credibility allegations was patently wrong or failed to build an accurate and logical bridge from the evidence to the conclusion.
2. Whether the ALJ improperly relied exclusively on objective medical evidence when evaluating Janet B.'s subjective symptoms.
3. Whether the ALJ's rejection of examining physician Dr. Joe Edward Banks II's medical-source opinion was supported by substantial evidence.
4. Whether the ALJ's decision that Janet B. was not disabled was supported by substantial evidence and the correct legal standards.

HOLDINGS

1. The ALJ's evaluation of Janet B.'s allegations regarding pain and functional limitations was not patently wrong because the ALJ considered evidence of improved or stable symptoms, hearing testimony, examinations, and the broader medical record, and adequately connected that evidence to the RFC determination.
2. The ALJ did not improperly rely solely on objective medical evidence in discounting Janet B.'s subjective symptom allegations.
3. The ALJ's decision to find Dr. Banks's opinion unpersuasive was supported by substantial evidence.
4. The ALJ's determination that Janet B. was not disabled was supported by substantial evidence and was affirmed.

KEY QUOTATIONS

"The court reviews the ALJ's decision to ensure that it "applies the correct legal standard and is supported by substantial evidence."" (Legal Standard)

"Although the ALJ could have said more when discussing why Janet's allegations were inconsistent with the record, his analysis said enough for the court to engage in a meaningful review" (Discussion § III.A)

“This is not a case where the ALJ impermissibly discounted a medical opinion because it was based solely on a claimant's subjective symptoms.” (Discussion § III.B)

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

Janet B. alleged disability beginning April 14, 2022, based principally on degenerative disc disease, Tarlov cysts, and coronary artery disease. She had two surgeries for Tarlov cysts in 2021 and later underwent cardiac stent placement and bypass surgery in 2023, followed by cardiac rehabilitation. Although she reported continuing pain and functional limitations, the administrative record included improved or stable symptoms, largely normal examinations, and testimony that she was doing well after rehabilitation. The ALJ found that she retained the capacity for a restricted range of light work and could perform past work as an office manager, salesperson, or bookkeeper.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

The Social Security Administration denied Janet B.'s applications for disability insurance benefits and supplemental security income initially and on reconsideration. Following an administrative hearing, the ALJ found that she was not disabled because she could perform past relevant work. The magistrate judge recommended affirming the ALJ's decision, Janet objected, and the district court overruled the objections and adopted the report and recommendation.

DISPOSITION

affirmed

CASES CITED

- Campbell v. Astrue, 627 F.3d 299, 306 (7th Cir. 2010)
- Biestek v. Berryhill, 587 U.S. 97, 103 (2019)
- Roddy v. Astrue, 705 F.3d 631, 636 (7th Cir. 2013)
- Clifford v. Apfel, 227 F.3d 863, 869, 872 (7th Cir. 2000)
- Cole v. Colvin, 831 F.3d 411, 412 (7th Cir. 2016)
- Burmester v. Berryhill, 920 F.3d 507, 510 (7th Cir. 2019)
- Curvin v. Colvin, 778 F.3d 645, 651 (7th Cir. 2015)
- Green v. Apfel, 204 F.3d 780, 781 (7th Cir. 2000)
- Groves v. Apfel, 148 F.3d 809, 811 (7th Cir. 1998)
- Thorlton v. King, 127 F.4th 1078, 1081, 1083 (7th Cir. 2025)
- Gedatus v. Saul, 994 F.3d 893, 901 (7th Cir. 2021)
- Grotts v. Kijakazi, 27 F.4th 1273, 1278 (7th Cir. 2022)

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